10: d'Orleans--261 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302

"I remark some differences between the inhabitants [LSS of Sop Nao] and the Thaï's whom we have just left. Here the men shave the head, leaving only a small circle of short hair on the top. The women wear only one garment, which is fastened round the waist. At first sight the type seems to me distinct from that of Thaï; I think it is rather more European, there is a look of Indo-Caucasian relationship. The face is paler and longer, the cheekbones less prominent, the eyes less oblique than those of their Eastern brothers. However, I am only stating a first impression, which requires confirmation."

10: d'Orleans--264 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 302, 832

"The women are not so shy here as in Upper Tonkin. They bathe in the river without troubling themselves about us. One young girl is coloured yellow with saffron, and we are told that this is done from coquetry. Most of them wear a small chignon, in which they often place flowers."

10: d'Orleans--275 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"... They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] are of small size, with very dark complexions and narrow foreheads; their eyes are close together, but the cheek-bones are not prominent; they wear their hair very short like the bristles of a brush."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

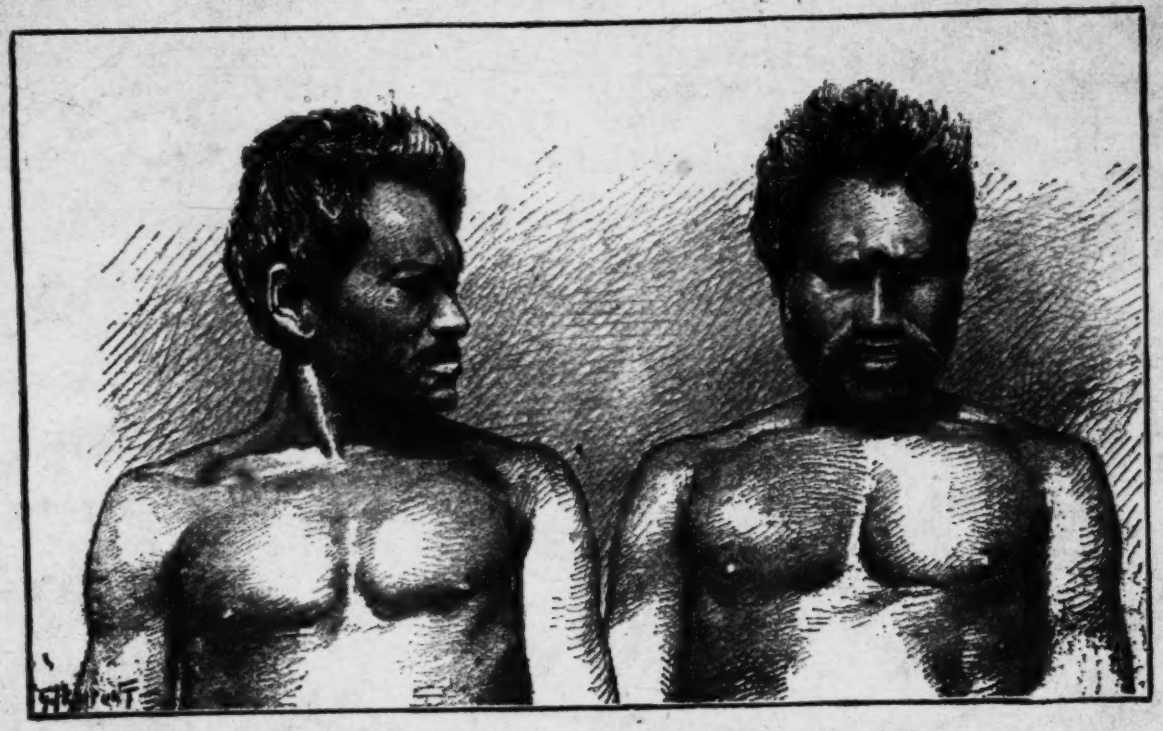
10: d'Orleans--303 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

KHAMOUKS, (FULL AND SIDE FACE), LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--316 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Their clothing [LSS: the Lu of Luang Prabang] is very poor compared with that of the latter, [LSS: the Laotians] the men wearing short blue trousers and the women, striped petticoats, the latter having their hair drawn up in a chignon at the top of the head, covered in many cases with a dark blue scarf, while both sexes wear a loose blue vest."

10: d'Orleans--381 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 302



A LAOS MAN (FULL AND SIDE FACE) OUTARADIT, MAY 1ST, 1892.

23: Franck--279 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 291, 302

"It was market day, and well fed, almost haughty women, with many brilliant reds and yellows in their dress, were squatted in the shade over their semi-tropical vegetables, and pottering homeward again in long broken files. They had almost nothing in common with the Annamese women, except their sex and the protection of the French. Their lustrous hair piled in great black glossy heaps on the top of the head in an intricate fashion, usually with a saffron, rose-yellow, or red cloth about it, and most of them with stomachers of similar gay colors, they were striking examples of the unrestricted portion of the human race. In complexion they were much like ourselves plus many layers of tan, but were noticeable for bad teeth."

23: Franck--349[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 302

"From Muongyu onward all the men had worn their hair pompadour; at about the place the last Ford picked me up even the women, no doubt influenced by their Siamese sisters across the river, rather than by any world-wide movement to do away with the chief glory of the sex, took to cutting their hair man-fashion. At Vientiane the women on both sides of the Mekong have these absurd Siamese hair-cuts, each hair standing on end as if the eyes beneath it had seen a whole flock of ghosts, and as they also chew betel-nut to make themselves still more repulsive it does not matter that one can rarely tell the two sexes apart."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

Vietnamese AMll
Laos AMB

V
302
386
314
136 employ only a powder, or dye their teeth in just one application. Some content themselves with a layer of stick-lack that darkens with time.

V
302
563 V. In other parts of Indochina

The Muongs, the Thaïs and the Mans of the upper region of Bac-kỳ use vegetable saps which they apply as a paste by means of a metal spatula.

L "The Laotians have an analogous method: they rub
302 their teeth with the sap of certain trees with hard secretions which result from the partial combustion [813] of the wood and the condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. In this way a sort of ointment is produced, sticky and black, which dries rapidly and is cemented
V to the teeth by means of alum" (de Reinach).

302 Here is how the Muongs used to blacken their teeth
563 (Béreni): "They cut a branch, preferably a straight one, strip it and heat it. When the sap begins to seep out, they collect it on a metal blade (generally a machete blade). Then they put this secretion on their index finger and rub their gums with it. This method is common to both groups: the Rhadés and the Muongs.

This blackening stops [obturates] the teeth quite adequately. But the result is much less durable than that obtained by the Vietnamese, whose technique is a great deal better.

792
785

To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

792
302
292

Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

792
668

Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[101
178]

(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

357

Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

276

Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

302
751

Teeth lacquer. So as to preserve the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

304

Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mekong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

619
[291] they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women, only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery, galloons or red turbans.

142 Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
• 302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face. Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough appearance but are very solid.

142 The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces, which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken, their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
301 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
264 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and Annamites.

276 The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
156 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301] [142]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally 292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work 181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear
• 302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
224 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

[212] Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[198] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

101 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--192 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438] go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load them on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435] hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438] any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435] between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kano- 314
Mak-Soum-Phon" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

173: Deydier --65 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

302

Fig. VIII. The Laotian hair-knot (Cl. Bouton).